

Executive Action Briefing

ASAP Strategic Focus Area

Need for Treatment within the Child Welfare System

BACKGROUND:

On November 19, 2007 the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) examined the strategic focus area of substance abuse treatment within the child welfare system. From that meeting emerged a series of recommendations that will enhance the capacity to meet the needs of families with substance abuse and mental health issues in the State of Arizona. ASAP will coordinate with its member agencies to implement actions to build the capacity to respond to the needs of this critical population.

MISSION: Increase the State's capacity to meet the needs of families affected by substance abuse and mental health issues within the child welfare system.

PRIORITY NEED

Problem #1: Inadequate resources and lack of documentation of all the funding resources available to support substance abuse treatment and mental health services within the child welfare system.

Goal: Direct resources to address the specific substance abuse and mental health needs of families within the child welfare system.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Identify all public and private discretionary funding related to substance abuse treatment, mental health and/or child welfare.
- ✓ Validate and/or verify existing state and federal formula funding resources that support substance abuse treatment and mental health services.
- ✓ Conduct a gap analysis between what is needed and what is available for substance abuse treatment and mental health services within the child welfare system.
- ✓ Reprioritize existing resources to target treatment needs of families within the child welfare system.

Responsible Agency: ASAP will provide direction to partner agencies to include DHS, DES, AHCCCS.

DATA COLLECTION

Problem #2: There is insufficient tracking and documentation regarding the need for substance abuse treatment and mental health services across agencies for families within the child welfare system.

Goal: Establish a central data collection infrastructure for substance abuse and mental health behavior within families in the child welfare system.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Identify the diverse data sources across state agencies.
- ✓ Establish a unified data collection infrastructure.
- ✓ Coordinate analysis of substance abuse and mental health data across agencies.

Responsible Agency: ASAP will provide direction and coordinate with the EPI Workgroup.

Problem #3: Protocols and forms to document and record substance abusing behavior and mental health issues of the parents/families are inconsistent and occasionally in conflict among participating agencies.

Goal: Establish unified protocols and forms for all agencies involved with families within the child welfare system to assess and document substance abusing behaviors and mental health issues.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Collect and analyze protocols, forms and procedures that document information about substance abusing behaviors and mental health issues.
- ✓ Convene relevant agencies to develop standardized questions, forms, and protocols to achieve consistent documentation of substance abusing behavior and mental health issues.

Responsible Agency: DES with partnership from DHS

Problem #4: Definitions of substance use and abuse across agencies is inconsistent and often driven by funding sources.

Goal: State agencies will develop a lexicon of terms that share a common definition.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Collect current definitions of substance use and abuse across all state agencies.
- ✓ Analyze existing definitions to identify how they are currently structured.
- ✓ Work with agencies to develop a more unified definition of substance use and abuse.

Responsible Agency: ASAP and its Subcommittees

CAPACITY OF THE SYSTEM TO RESPOND TO THE NEED

Problem #5: There is a lack of coordination and the presence of “silo” funding streams among agencies involved with serving families within the child welfare system.

Goal: Develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to avoid duplication of effort and coordinate service delivery to meet the needs of this target population.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Accurately identify and assess how the system is delivering services and what are the gaps.
- ✓ Determine if we have sufficient resources and infrastructure to respond to the demand.
- ✓ Identify specific strategies to address resources gaps.
- ✓ Redirect funding streams to see which ones have the greatest potential for braided funding to target and maximize limited resources.

Responsible Agency: ASAP with guidance from the Governor's Office of Strategic Planning and Budget.

Problem #6: There is insufficient coordination of the case management system for children and families across agencies (child protection, juvenile court, education, treatment, etc.)

Goal: Structure a comprehensive, coordinated case management system that maximizes limited resources and best serves the needs of families in the child welfare system.

Recommended Action Steps:

- ✓ Assess the capacity of case workers to understand and appropriately intervene with substance abuse and mental health involved families.
- ✓ Identify cross-training opportunities to reinforce integration and coordination for agencies providing services to families within the child welfare system.
- ✓ Establish an infrastructure for the coordination of case management of families across agencies.

Responsible Agency: ASAP will provide direction to partner agencies to include DHS, DES, AHCCCS.